Preparatory Committee for the 202[illegible]view Conference of the Parties to the Tr[illegible]on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Implementation of the conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Summary update to the reports submitted by Austria

Introduction

1. Pursuant to action 20 of the action plan on nuclear disarmament adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and with a view to underlining the importance of transparency and confidence-building, Austria submits the present update to the previous reports submitted for the 2015 Review Conference (NPT/CONF.2015/28) and the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.I/1) on national activities carried out since 2015 to implement the conclusions and recommendations of the 2010 Review Conference.

Nuclear disarmament

Action 1 of the action plan

2. Austria has continued to pursue a world without nuclear weapons, based firmly on the Treaty as the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

3. On the occasion of the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Vienna in December 2014 (see NPT/CONF.2015/28), Austria issued a pledge in which it committed itself to vigorously pursuing efforts towards nuclear disarmament. That pledge was subsequently renamed the Humanitarian Pledge and has now been endorsed by 127 States.

4. At the 2015 Review Conference, on 28 April 2015, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria, Sebastian Kurz, delivered a statement on behalf of 159 States regarding the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

5. Later in 2015, Austria was among the initiators of four General Assembly resolutions relating to nuclear disarmament (resolutions 70/33, 70/47, 70/48 and 70/50).

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6. Throughout 2016, Austria engaged actively in the deliberations held in Geneva by the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/33. In particular, Austria submitted two working papers to the Group in its national capacity.

7. On 21 September 2016, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria addressed the General Assembly and, by calling for and outlining a concrete path towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons worldwide, reiterated the country's commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons.

8. Austria was among the initiators of General Assembly resolution 71/258 on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which was adopted on 23 December 2016 by a large majority of Member States.

9. Pursuant to resolution 71/258, negotiations within the framework of the United Nations for a legal instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, were held in New York from 27 to 31 March and from 15 June to 7 July 2017. On 7 July 2017, Austria was one of 122 States that voted for the adoption of the text of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. On 20 September 2017, the Minister for Foreign Affairs signed the Treaty. At the time of submission of the present report, the procedure for national ratification was under way and was expected to be finished soon. The Treaty represents the first concrete result of multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations since the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996. It contributes in particular to the implementation of article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, thereby strengthening the latter as a whole.

10. During the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, Austria has been among the initiators of resolutions relating to nuclear disarmament, notably resolution 72/30 on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and resolution 72/31 on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, as well as supporting a number of other related resolutions.

Actions 6, 7 and 9

11. Austria, as a State member of the Conference on Disarmament, has continued to support efforts to revitalize that forum.

Actions 12 to 14

12. Austria has continued to use all occasions, in both bilateral and multilateral forums, to promote the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by States that have not yet done so, with a view to its early entry into force. Until his regrettable death on 13 January 2018, the Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs of Austria from 2002 to 2013, Johannes Kyrle, continued to work actively as a member of the Group of Eminent Persons of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, assisting with outreach efforts for the entry into force of the Treaty. Austria has continued to co-fund the radionuclide laboratory in Seibersdorf, Austria, which is certified by the Preparatory Commission, and supported the establishment of a permanent equipment storage and maintenance facility in Seibersdorf, the construction of which started in early 2018. The Ministry of Defence of Austria continued to provide in-kind support (in the form of training sites, equipment and personnel) to the Preparatory Commission free of charge.

Action 19

13. Austria has continued to support the Office for Disarmament Affairs, in particular by providing substantial financial support for its branch office established in Vienna in 2012.

Action 22

14. Austria has continued to support education efforts aimed at disarmament and non-proliferation, above all by supporting the Vienna Centre for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, which was established in 2011 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Austria and the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies. The Vienna Centre engages in a broad range of activities, such as lectures, seminars and publications, thereby benefiting the international dialogue on disarmament and non-proliferation issues being held in Vienna and elsewhere.

Non-proliferation

Action 23

15. Austria has continued to highlight the role of the Non-Proliferation Treaty as the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Accordingly, Austria actively promotes the universalization of the Treaty, both in its national capacity and by contributing to the design and implementation of relevant policies of the European Union.

Actions 24 to 29

16. Austria is among the States that have both a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in force, representing the current verification standard of the Agency. Austria is also among the States for which IAEA drew the broader conclusion that all nuclear material in the country remained in peaceful activities, and for which integrated safeguards are being implemented.

Actions 35 to 39

17. With a view to ensuring that nuclear-related exports do not directly or indirectly contribute to the development of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, Austria has been applying the understandings of the Zangger Committee and the guidelines developed by the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

18. With a view to halting the proliferation of ballistic missiles which could be used as a means of delivery for nuclear warheads, Austria has also been applying the export control guidelines of the Missile Technology Control Regime. On the occasion of the thirty-first plenary meeting of the Regime, held in Dublin in October 2017, Austria declared its willingness to chair the Regime for the 2020/21 period. Furthermore, Austria has participated in the transparency and confidence-building measures enshrined in the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, for which it has continued to function as the Executive Secretariat and Immediate Central Contact.

Actions 40 to 46

19. Austria has adhered to all legal instruments regarding the physical protection of nuclear material and the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism, and incorporated their principles and provisions into its national legislation and implemented them.

Peaceful uses of nuclear energy

Action 47

20. Just as other States, Austria exercises the inalienable right under article IV of the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in conformity with articles I, II and III, while respecting the corresponding rights of other States. This right entails the option not to use nuclear power. Austria continues to hold the view that nuclear power can never be 100 per cent safe and that, given the long-term effects of nuclear accidents and the responsibilities associated with the nuclear fuel cycle, nuclear power does not contribute to sustainable development. Given the combination of safety, security and proliferation concerns, nuclear power is, likewise, not a viable avenue to confront global challenges such as climate change. Consequently, the Federal Constitutional Act of 1999 for a Non-Nuclear Austria prohibits, inter alia, the use of nuclear fission for the generation of power in Austria.

Actions 48 to 58

21. Austria views the role of IAEA as central in guaranteeing that countries exercise their right under article IV of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in accordance with the best safety, security and non-proliferation standards. Austria has therefore continued to support IAEA in this regard, inter alia, by paying its assessed contributions to IAEA as well as its share to the Technical Cooperation Fund in full and on time, and by supporting the creation and maintenance of IAEA infrastructure.

Actions 59 to 64

22. Austria reaffirms the importance of ongoing international efforts to improve the global nuclear safety regime, including the robust implementation of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, and notes the central role of IAEA in the sharing and application of the lessons learned from the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station. Furthermore, Austria emphasizes that it is important for all States, in particular those with nuclear fuel cycle activities, to become parties to all conventions and agreements relevant to safety and security and to support the further development, as necessary, of legally binding instruments to ensure a better global safety and security framework. Austria is party to all conventions in the area of nuclear safety and an active participant in the corresponding review processes. Austria also has a strong civil nuclear liability regime in place.

23. Austria is eliminating highly enriched uranium in national civilian stocks and in use. Together with Norway, Austria held the second International Symposium on the Minimization of Highly Enriched Uranium in Vienna in 2012 and reported on it in working paper NPT/CONF.2015/PC.I/WP.1. The symposium co-hosts, Austria, Norway and the Nuclear Threat Initiative, identified a number of policy ideas and recommendations as a possible policy agenda for the future. They are aimed at promoting tangible progress, as well as a culture of transparency, trust and cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy that also ensures the highest level of safety, security and non-proliferation. The ideas and recommendations concern the minimization of highly enriched uranium, civilian naval propulsion reactors and transparency, and a few of them concern the expansion of efforts in those fields.